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No CIA ties, defense witness says

But signed secrecy agreement at Rewald's request

By Walter Wright

Advertiser Staff Writer

Milwaukee attorney David J. Baldwin, owner of Milwaukee's Safe House restaurant, admits that he is CIA. "Catholic, Irish, and Alcoholic," that is.

But Baldwin said Friday he has nothing to do with the real Central Intelligence Agency, even though he once signed a CIA secrecy agreement at the request of Ronald Rewald, who is on trial on federal charges of fraud, tax evasion and perjury.

Baldwin was the 11th witness called to testify for the defense, which is trying to prove Rewald's claim that he took money from investors under false pretenses only to protect his CIA cover as head of the Bishop Baldwin Rewald Dillingham & Wong investment firm.

Baldwin testified he thought it was necessary to sign the secrecy agreement in order to continue to deal with Rewald regarding proposed trade deals, including military equipment, with India. He said he didn't check Rewald out with the CIA at the time, "but I wish to hell I had."

The CIA admits using Rewald and some of his companies to provide cover for some CIA personnel, but denies authorizing Rewald to take investors' money.

Baldwin said he first met Rewald, a former Milwaukee businessman who came to Hawaii in 1977, through Dr. Wes Vogt, a Milwaukee psychiatrist and longtime Rewald friend who had already invested money with Rewald.

Baldwin said Vogt told him Rewald was an ex-CIA agent now running a successful international investment firm in Honolulu, and might be interested in a Waikiki version of Baldwin's famous Safe House restaurant in Milwaukee.

The restaurant, which has been written up in Time magazine, features a James Bond motif with secret entrances and drinks with names like "Double Agent."

Baldwin said he came to Hawaii in 1982 to discuss a Honolulu restaurant with Rewald, and began getting \$500 a month from Rewald's firm. He said he eventually was getting paid \$4,000 a month by Bishop Baldwin when the company collapsed in July 1983.

Early in 1983, Baldwin said, he travelled to India with the company's president, Sunny Wong, to see about opening a Bishop Baldwin office there.

Baldwin said an old friend of his with extensive contacts in India, Chan Pasrich, had sought to represent Bishop Baldwin as a trading company in India for products ranging from potash to C-130 military aircraft.

Rewald has claimed the CIA was involved in his firm's supposed efforts to sell military equipment to several countries, including India and Taiwan.

Baldwin said it seemed a little odd when Rewald asked him to sign a CIA secrecy agreement dated Nov. 22, 1982, but that Rewald had explained, "I can't talk to you" about certain things unless the agreement was signed.

Baldwin said he assumed he had to have some kind of clearance if he was to be involved in deals to sell C-130 aircraft to India.

He said Rewald also asked him to sign a CIA employment application, "which I didn't understand. I sure as hell didn't need a job, but I got the feeling if I didn't do it, this deal (having Pasrich represent Bishop Baldwin) wouldn't go through."

None of the deals or the restaurant ever materialized, though, he said.

Baldwin said he invested \$10,000 of his own money in the company, and got about \$24,000 in payments from Rewald, so didn't suffer a net loss.

Rewald's trial will continue tomorrow with testimony from the real CIA personnel who dealt with him.